United Nations A/RES/68/218

General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 January 2014

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 19 (*j*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/438/Add.10)*]

68/218. The role of the international community in averting the radiation threat in Central Asia

The General Assembly,

Taking into account the outcome of the high-level international forum entitled "Uranium Tailings in Central Asia: Local Problems, Regional Consequences, Global Solution", held in Geneva on 29 June 2009,

Taking into account also the outcome of the international conference entitled "Uranium Tailings in Central Asia: Joint Efforts in Risk Reduction", held in Bishkek on 24 and 25 October 2012,

Noting that numerous burial sites of uranium waste and other extremely hazardous radioactive processing wastes are located in densely populated areas of the Central Asian countries,

Noting also that many tailings ponds are located in seismically active areas close to population centres and the banks of major rivers in the region and are subject to the threat of natural disasters,

Reaffirming the human rights to life, to an adequate standard of living and to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and stressing in this regard the need to mitigate the impact of natural and man-made disasters in the areas around uranium waste burial sites and tailings ponds in order to avoid loss of human life, as well as immediate and long-term negative consequences for human health,

Considering that, despite the efforts made by the States of Central Asia at the national level and despite the support of international programmes and projects to remediate former uranium mines and tailings ponds, a number of States continue to have serious social, economic and environmental problems associated with former uranium mines and tailings ponds,

Striving to contribute to strengthening the security and safety of radioactive materials,

Expressing gratitude to donor countries, in particular the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and the

13-45253 (E)

Please recycle

United States of America, and to international and regional organizations and financial institutions, including the United Nations Development Programme, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the Eurasian Economic Community, the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank and others, which are providing assistance in addressing the problems of uranium tailings in the Central Asian region,

Welcoming the efforts of the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency relating to technical coordination for multilateral initiatives to remediate legacy uranium production sites, notably in Central Asia, through the Coordination Group for Uranium Legacy Sites, as emphasized in resolution GC (57)/RES/9 on measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety, adopted by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency at its fifty-seventh session,

Stressing the importance of sharing information, good practices and lessons learned in the management of radioactively contaminated areas obtained in the process of overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and encouraging cooperation to strengthen national expertise in radiation safety and radiation protection, including through relevant training programmes, and the use of experience gained, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, in addressing the human dimension of preparedness and recovery from nuclear disaster situations,[1]

Taking into account that the Governments and populations of the States of Central Asia are aware of the threat of possible natural or man-made disasters and their global consequences for the lives and the health of a large number of people and for the environment,

1. *Notes* the importance of remediating areas affected by former uranium extraction plants;

2. *Recognizes* the need to devise and promote effective programmes and projects for the responsible and safe management of radioactive and toxic waste in Central Asia;

3. *Also recognizes* the role of the international community in averting the radiation threat in Central Asia, and emphasizes the importance of adopting preventive and other measures to resolve the problem of radioactive and toxic waste and to remediate the polluted areas in accordance with the highest safety standards and best global practices;

4. *Calls upon* the international community to assist the States of Central Asia in resolving the problems of uranium tailings ponds, and emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation in the following priority areas: improvement of the legislative framework; management and maintenance at safe levels of uranium and other radioactive and toxic tailings; remediation of tailings ponds and development and implementation of special programmes and projects to improve the monitoring of their safety; raising public awareness; adoption of measures to prevent people from gaining access to polluted materials; and implementation of socioeconomic, health and humanitarian measures to enhance the quality and standard of living of the population in regions where tailings ponds are located;

[1] See A/68/498.

5. *Also calls upon* the international community to continue the active sharing of experience and knowledge so as to effectively resolve the problems of uranium and other radioactive and toxic tailings;

6. *Expresses support* for the efforts made by the States of Central Asia in devising and implementing their country programmes, including in mobilizing domestic resources, and encourages the States of the region to hold further bilateral and multilateral negotiations to avert the radiation threat in Central Asia.

71st plenary meeting
20 December 2013